2: Courlander 3-5 (1937-1958) 1960 8V3 Haiti 8V3

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A la youn président,
C'est Tirésius Augustin Simon Sam.
Si tout tí con ça,
Haïti ta finí! [Ex. 111]

There was a president,
He was Tirésius Augustin Simon Sam.
If they were all like him,
Haiti would be finished!

In 1902 General Nord Alexis became the chief executive of Haiti. His abilities and accomplishments are still being debated, but he appears to have been a rather lovable old man whom everyone called by the affectionate term Uncle. His administration was fairly stable and prosperous—as prosperity is known in Haiti—and in large measure peaceful. When his election was confirmed, the people were convinced that the nation was in for a period of law and order, and that the constant threat of cacos and brigandage would come to an end. One of the election-year songs goes:

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Nous crions vive, c'est pou' l'armé du Nord!
Tintin cila ça va finí!
Nous crions vive, c'est pou' soldats du Nord!
Tintin cila ça va finí!
Tintin cila, tintin cila, tintin cila va finí!
Bassin Vodoun, Bassin Vodoun, Bassin Vodoun c'est pou' nous! [Ex. 112]

We cry long live Nord's army!
The chaos will be ended!
We cry long live Nord's soldiers!
The chaos will be ended!
The chaos, the chaos, the chaos will be ended!
Bassin Vodoun,* Bassin Vodoun, Bassin Vodoun is for us!

One of the serious problems confronting Nord Alexis after his election was that of a disappearing national currency. Haitian paper money was circulating elsewhere in the West Indies and in South America and was becoming increasingly scarce in Haiti itself. Nord Alexis called in all the old currency and issued new, with the happy result that large quantities of money were again seen in the Republic. The common people who made the songs seem to have been very grateful:

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Alexis Nord Papa ou bon chef oh!
Ou ba nous monê, ou ba nous papier!
Alexis Nord Papa ou bon chef oh!
Ou ba nous monê, ou ba nous papier!

*Probably a place name.

Nous pas mandé ou anyien!
Nous pas mandé l'a'gent encò?
Papa Nord ça nous ta mandé oh chef,
C'est bambeche nous mandé ou! [Ex. 113]

Alexis Nord, Papa, you are a good chief, oh!
You gave us money, you gave us paper!
Alexis Nord, Papa, you are a good chief, oh!
You gave us money, you gave us paper!
We don't ask you for anything more!
We don't ask you again for money!
Papa Nord, only one thing we are going to ask you, chief,
It is a big celebration we ask for!

The president's wife, Çéçé, seems to have been very proud of him and very sure of his talents. When the army bugles blow a general assembly call, they are supposed to be saying:

Çéçé té dit Alexis Nord grand moune nan tout corps lil
Çéçé té dit Alexis Nord grand moune nan tout corps lil
Çéçé té dit la quitté pour voir l'heure li vlé!
Çéçé té dit Tonton Nord grand moune nan tout corps lil [Ex. 114]

Çéçé said Alexis Nord is a thoroughly fine man!
Çéçé said Alexis Nord is a thoroughly fine man!
Çéçé said he will quit his office whenever he sees fit!
Çéçé said Uncle Nord is a thoroughly fine man!

Another bugle call, with words attributed to Nord's wife, contains a note of complaint:

Çéçé said *assailez!*
Çéçé said that, said that!
Çéçé said if you don't have any money you can't have a woman!
Çéçé said *assailez!*
Çéçé said that, said that!
Çéçé said we are working our guts out!
Çéçé said *assailez!*
Çéçé said that, said that!
Çéçé said Alexis Nord is president!

Çéçé was not the only one in Haiti who had confidence in Nord's staying power. One popular song of the period goes:

Alexis Nord Papa,
Bondieu qui mettè ou lil
Consolidé lil yo
Qui vlé ba ou traka!

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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very favorable reception by Haitian scholars and intellectuals. As its author and others have pointed out, few countries in modern times have received as bad a press at the hands of foreign observers as Haiti. A small, rugged nation, born of an exhausting and destructive revolution, its people poor, disease-ridden, illiterate, and erratically led, independent Haiti gives the impression of having drifted aimlessly for more than a century. Observers from "more developed" lands have had a field day—and still have—bemoaning the evil consequences of a mass of African slaves having turned on their French masters to destroy them and their works. It is still fashionable to allude to Haiti in deploring independence movements, racial desegregation, indigenous political leadership, and economic sovereignty. But too little scholarship has since been invested, as Leyburn invested it, in delineating the national and international forces which have operated to keep Haiti poor and backward. Nor has contemporary research led to sufficiently revealing comparisons between the social history of Haiti and that of her more colonial neighbors in the Caribbean area. Leyburn's work enhanced the possibilities for such comparisons and drew some morals which Haiti's detractors often ignore; but in making his case, the author carefully avoids lapsing into romanticism, or into the inaccuracy born of uncritical sympathy.

The book was published as the final steps were being taken to end the official United States presence in Haiti. The occupation had begun in 1915, ostensibly to restore order in a situation marked by political chaos. Haitian defaulting on debts to the French and Germans had raised the specter of foreign—that is, European—occupation, which created considerable North American anxiety; and there were large Haitian debts outstanding to United States banks as well. When the United States decided to move militarily, the abstract issue of justice was ignored, to be raised for contemplation only after the occupation itself was a fact. Military occupation continued for nineteen years, and the complete termination of United States controls over the national affairs of Haiti did not come until 1946, long after Leyburn's book had appeared. Twenty-five years have now elapsed since Leyburn wrote, and the events of these years are relevant to any retrospective view of the author's interpretations.

Much, indeed, has happened in Haiti since 1941: the United States withdrawal and the fading of the effects, both good and bad, of the occupation; the positive economic consequences for Haiti of World

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175 business and personal ties with North Americans and other foreign
643 groups. Among the families of these leaders are Swiss, German, and
66 French nationals, and some Syrians and Lebanese who hold United
795 States citizenship. The business community had played a part in the downfall of the Magloire regime, and business strikes were a typical political instrument for putting pressure on presidential incumbents. In addition, the clergy—particularly the Catholic clergy—exerted political influence. Duvalier, while well aware of this, also attended to the importance of vodoun* in Haiti, and to the influence wielded by its cult leaders, particularly in the countryside and among the urban poor. Finally, the President understood the strength of groups such as the university students, the small but politically aware labor unions, and certain professional associations, whose political strength could be felt particularly in times of crisis. The Duvalier regime has displayed intelligence as well as ruthlessness in dealing with these diverse centers of political strength and potential opposition.

175 The official request for a United States Marine Corps mission to
648 "train" the Haitian Army was a brilliant political move by Duvalier,
701 apparently designed to serve several objectives simultaneously. It is
702 entirely correct that the renewed presence of the Marines in Haiti
66 created considerable rancor in some circles, but it also strengthened Duvalier's hand in his dealings with all sources of internal opposition. To some extent it apparently reassured the business community; and it turned out to have reduced, rather than to have increased, the maneuverability of the United States in developing a "corrective" or "restraining" policy toward the Duvalier regime. Perhaps most important, it helped Duvalier in his plan to build a praetorian guard to counterbalance the power of the army itself.

625 The *tonton macoute*—a Creole epithet for the bogeyman—is an extremely interesting variation on the security police theme. Its members wear no official uniform (though blue denim pants and felt hats
[701] are affected). Members of the "TTM" carry out acts of terrorism against groups and individuals and have seriously weakened the po-
• [652] licing function and prestige of the regular army. Some calculations put the operating costs of the TTM as high as one third of the governmental budget. Though small groups of the TTM are distributed

* Or, as it is more commonly called, "voodoo." Creole words employed in this introduction are transcribed in Laubach orthography (see Hall, 1953). It was not possible to extend this transcription to the original Leyburn text, where a "Gallic" orthography is followed.

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intrepidity in enterprise is required. It is striking that those foreign captains of industry—mainly from the United States—who invest in Haiti, expect (and often get) governmental guarantees of a sort they could not dream of in their own countries; in this regard, they merely conform to Haitian expectations.

Haiti's problems, then, are not simply those that face any less developed country, vast though such problems may be. Nor is it intelligent to lay Haiti's problems at the feet of the nation's present rulers. The structure of the national economy has not changed significantly during the past twenty-five years—except that boom years could provide a temporary aura of prosperity—regardless of the philosophy or popularity of the regime in power. If nothing else, the present nadir of Haiti's fortunes demonstrates that United States aid averaging twelve and a half million dollars yearly over more than a decade has produced no enduring improvements of any kind. It may further demonstrate that, shockingly poor as the country is, it emphatically does not depend on such aid. As of 1964, the regime in power was operating on a monthly budget of $1,800,000, only $400,000 of which went for purposes other than salaries. In other words, the ministries do little more than perpetuate themselves unchanged. The yeomanry, living near subsistence level, continues to produce most of what it needs, while restricting its cash expenditures even more severely than in the past. The risks—in terms, say, of public health—of running a society under these circumstances are great; but there is no reason to suppose that regimes of the Haitian sort will be destroyed or improved by a show of popular unrest originating in the countryside. Difficult as life is for the Haitian countryman, and no people in Latin America lives more poorly, the real pinch is probably being experienced more acutely among the city folk than among their rural fellow citizens. It matters politically, therefore, who these city folk are and what they do.

To begin with, there has been a significant loss of professional people, almost all of whom were urban, through migration and exile, especially since 1958. Haitian doctors, dentists, and other professionals are widely scattered today, both in the developed and the less developed countries of the world. Former army officers, journalists, diplomats, businessmen, and academicians have fled political repression, perhaps with the hope of eventually returning to their own country.

Taxes were heavy

175 651 652 and work strenuous; but there were a sound currency, commercial and agricultural prosperity, and a full treasury.

Like many a great man he was an overweening egotist. His 175 643 159 energy and ambition, for Haiti as well as for himself, neither understood nor tolerated a lesser determination than his own. At times he seemed more intent upon the letter than upon the spirit of his laws. Probably his chief defect, a common failing of strong men, was a disregard for humble individual worth. To write of him invites the most colorful vocabulary. He is Black Majesty and the Emperor Jones. By almost any standards of leadership he would be accounted a great man. He lacked only those few final, subtle qualities which make for sheer genius. In 1820, stricken by paralysis and faced with defections in his army, he died as he had lived, dramatically, ending his life with a specially saved bullet (folklore says a silver one), in his palace of the ironic name, Sans Souci.

175 643 [64] In no significant respect did Christophe change the feudal structure of economic organization begun by Toussaint and carried on by Dessalines. It was in administration, especially as it affected social status, that the thirteen years of Christophe were important for the future of Haiti. Where the Emperor had been an unpredictable tyrant whose heavy hand inspired only terror, Christophe was a sternly just father whose well-disciplined children respected, admired, and even loved him.

175 427 475 655 566 643 The land policy of the two régimes was similar. Government estates were farmed out on five-year leases to the highest bidders among the well-to-do; large plantations belonging to the state were tilled by cultivators who might, without taking the term too harshly, be called serfs; loyal supporters and wealthy individuals were entrusted with responsibility. Like Dessalines, Christophe added wealth to power and rendered all his subjects dependent upon himself rather than on their own resources and influence—but all this with a difference.

175 643 642 565 Where the Emperor had denied the natural vanity of his aides by refusing them nobility, Christophe accepted their ambition as perfectly normal and made use of it for his own purposes. Four years after he had established his state, he changed it from a republic to a kingdom; all his important men he made dukes, barons, counts, knights. He warned them that he would expect them to live up to the dignities conferred upon them. Pomp and regalia are costly;

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Northern Haiti flourished magnificently under Christophe's sternly benevolent rule. The King had that daring spirit of initiative which was so generally lacking in later Haitian history; he had, in addition, the power necessary to force through a new adjustment if the old way showed defects.[17] He excited artificial wants among his leaders by making nobles of them, and then compelled them to satisfy these wants without ever slipping back to a lower standard of living. Thirteen years of enforced labor and of order kept by a rigorously effective police force gave northern Haiti the kind of prosperity she had known in colonial days. Christophe encouraged commerce and protected foreign traders. He called in all debased coinage, substituting for it sound gold and silver currency. The revenue he raised was larger than it had been since 1791, amounting to about $3,500,000 annually. Probably the most eloquent testimony to his success is the fact that at his death, when the kingdom of the North was once more united with the republic of the South, more than six million dollars found their way into the republican treasury.

The Black King's economic system worked. It was based on a social division of the people, with the masses doing manual labor, and the aristocrats definitely set apart and recognized as upper class. By 1820 Haiti was well on its way toward the caste system.

3. *Pétion* (*1807–1818*)

Almost all Latin-American countries in the nineteenth century exhibited one common feature: an aristocratic landowning class lording it over peons. Haiti did not follow this pattern. She had aristocrats and peasants, but the aristocrats did not own most of the land, and the peasants were not peons. If later rulers had kept the organization of economic life begun by Toussaint and developed by his fellow blacks, Dessalines and Christophe, it is almost certain that Haitian social evolution would have resembled that of the rest of Latin America, for it would not have been a great change from

17. Duraciné Vaval, "Le Roi d'Haïti Henri Christophe," in *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti*, II, No. 3 (June 1931), p. 14, says that Haiti's periodic civil troubles and social misfortunes, both ending in a diminution of the state's autonomy, have been due to economic maladjustments. "Our weaknesses in political life derive from our immobility in material production." Immobility is an index of stagnation. Few rulers of Haiti have been at once powerful enough to overcome the immobility and wise enough to know what measures had to be taken.

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of one quarter of the crop was abolished.[23] This tax worked moderately well on great plantations with hundreds of workers and a large annual budget, but it bore heavily, sometimes unfairly, on smaller farms. To give up the government's fourth meant a tremendous drop in state revenues, but this was to be compensated by a new tax of ten *gourdes* (a gourde was then worth about five cents) on every thousand pounds of coffee sold in the country, and by an export tax on coffee. A man might raise sugar or make syrup, tafia (raw rum), and distilled rum, without paying any tax at all. Coffee culture required little careful cultivation, while sugar required a great deal; removing the tax from sugar would, it was hoped, encourage the cultivation of cane. The President was putting into practice the then novel idea of Adam Smith that the more freedom an enterpriser is allowed, the more he will produce, so that by pursuing his own self-interest he unintentionally benefits the state. To know definitely what taxes will be imposed, reasoned Pétion, is more of an inducement to a landlord than to face the double fluctuation of crop prices and the state's quarter. Small proprietors and sugar planters were now, like the larger landholders, attracted to Pétion's régime.

His final boon to proprietors, and one which Adam Smith would not have approved, was that of governmental subsidies in bad years. When prices of coffee and sugar were low, the state bought large quantities of these crops for the purpose of raising their price. The result was to increase the debt and to make the people feel that the state was responsible for individual economic success, rather than their own efforts.

These first concessions were all made to the important people of the South—to the mulattoes, families of the old régime, persons who desired economic prominence in order to bolster social position. The small folk of the Republic came next. The President recommended to the Senate the abolition of the law dating back to Toussaint's time which prohibited the holding of plantations of less than a minimum acreage. The Senate accordingly[24] reduced the minimum holding to thirty acres.[25] Actually this legislation did not bring

23. By a law of March 9, 1807. This tax was instituted by Toussaint and continued in effect by Dessalines and Christophe.

24. On April 21, 1807.

25. Or ten *carreaux*. Toussaint's law had allowed properties of fifty acres only in cases of exceptional fertility of land. See Note 18.

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175 In his easygoing republic Pétion saw prosperity slowly wane,
433 cultivation decline, profits give way to deficits. He issued a large
652 amount of paper currency, and continually hoped for better times
534 which did not come. The days of large fortunes were over. The economic system affected the aristocrats: although they were still landowners, so also were thousands of common folk. The criterion of rank became increasingly not wealth, but rather pursuit of a career which demanded no manual labor. Distinctions, if they are to be effective, must be made on the basis of conditions not easily achieved by all and sundry. Education and good French met this requirement; even more did a light skin color.

175 Pétion, darling of the mulattoes though he was, never drew a color
643 line. There is no suggestion in any of his actions that he gave prefer-
641 ence in his appointments to people of his own color. He suppressed
563 at least one insurrection led by men who would have liked to stir up color prejudice. He often tried by quiet irony to make his people less sensitive to their complexions. It is eloquent testimony to his fairness that the 200,000 blacks in the republic never faltered in their love for him. They had ample reason to mistrust the haughty and ambitious colored people, some of whom had lorded it over them in colonial days; but they knew that the President did not share their pretentious attitude. One look at the North, ruled by a black, was enough to convince any Southerner that his happiness was safer in the hands of a mulatto than in those of a Negro ex-slave. At Pétion's death, therefore, there was no demur at the succession to power of another light-skinned man.

175 Haitians of a later day have discussed at great length the wisdom
643 of Pétion's parceling of state lands. His supporters (and they are
642 numerous) as well as his critics generally keep the controversy on the lofty plane of ideals, intentions, and hypothetical contingencies. Pétion is praised for being generous to humble folk where all other rulers of his country had been severe; for being a realist in accepting and adjusting his measures to the limitations of the average Haitian's character; for building a patriotism upon love of one's own small plot of land; for ruling constitutionally, with his Senate, rather than dictatorially. Most especially, Pétion is the one man among the early rulers who seemed to have any realization of the human values involved. Material gain is desirable but not at the expense of liberty. Freedom means something, even in poverty.

The critics do not challenge Pétion's good intentions or integrity;

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175 114 433 Practically every contemporary foreign visitor contrasted the divergent policies of Christophe and Pétion to the overwhelming advantage of the former. One Englishman, intent upon defending the Negro against the charge of "natural indolence," went so far as to say that the majority of the people in the republic, although "possessed of small estates, on which they earned their living," were yet no less diligent than the forced laborers on Christophe's plantations in the North.[34] His only proof of this contention, however, was the greater volume of commerce at Port-au-Prince, capital of the republic, than at Cap-Henry (now Cap-Haïtien), capital of the kingdom.

175 433 652 642 The economic case is strongly against Pétion. The decline of large-scale agriculture, the empty treasury, governmental purchase of surpluses when prices were low, debasing the coinage[35]—by such practical proofs, the republic was vastly less efficient than the stern dictatorship of the kingdom. But Pétion's people had freedom, while Christophe's were serfs. And Pétion's republic endured, to become reunited Haiti. The kingdom perished with Christophe.

4. *The Final Effort toward Plantation Life (1818–1826)*

175 643 642 The mantle of Pétion fell in 1818 upon the shoulders of his meticulous secretary and minister, Jean-Pierre Boyer. Two years later, upon the death of Christophe, the kingdom of the North was once again united, without a struggle, to the South.[36] It is conceivable that the refined mulatto Boyer might have infused into his people a spirit of industry and ambition, now that tranquillity reigned after fourteen years of separation and warfare. The people of the North had had a long experience of intense activity, while those of the

34. W. W. Harvey, *Sketches of Hayti; from the Expulsion of the French, to the Death of Christophe* (London, 1827), pp. 361 ff.

[652] 35. Pétion's coins were so easily imitated that the country was inundated with counterfeit money. The government issued only five million dollars worth of this currency, but in 1818 twelve millions were in circulation, the surplus having been fabricated in Europe and the United States.

[175] [643] [642] [648] 36. In 1822–23 Boyer likewise succeeded, with little fighting, in bringing the Spanish two thirds of the island (Santo Domingo) into the republic. For the first time since 1697 the whole island was really unified under one rule. Toussaint had held it in 1801–2 and the Haitians claimed it thereafter, but real unity did not come until Boyer's time, when all the Spanish colonies in the New World were breaking away from their mother country. Santo Domingo regained its independence in 1844 shortly after the abdication of Boyer.

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South in general had the most loyal feeling toward a government which had been benevolently generous to them. A blend of the two might have been fruitful.

It was not any want of patriotism that caused Boyer to miss his great opportunity but rather a defect of ability. Desiring, like Pétion, to lead rather than to drive his people, he nevertheless lacked even more than his former chief the force of personality which might have persuaded them to work hard for the greater glory of Haiti. Despising the brutal compulsion exercised by Dessalines and Christophe, which he regarded as savage and too closely resembling the earlier methods of slave owners; wishing to emulate solely the gentleness of his predecessor, Boyer hoped for a number of years that his people would become industrious of their own accord. His hopes were frustrated. During his twenty-five-year presidency the mass of Haitians became so indifferent to pecuniary inducements that little work could be got from them beyond that required to produce necessary food. As commerce declined, the President was driven to fresh issues of debased currency and to the opening of mines in different parts of the country, though he knew that the richest mine Haiti possessed was its still fertile soil.

For the first seven years Boyer pursued a policy based on hopeful expectation, refusing to inaugurate any of the forceful measures of his black predecessors. But by 1823 the treasury, enriched though it had been by the surplus from Christophe's exchequer, was empty; in 1824 disbursements exceeded income. Convinced in 1825 that his *laissez-faire* policy was failing to produce results, he decided to heed the insistent counsel of those (including most of the aristocratic, landholding class) who advised the reëstablishment of a coercive system of agriculture. His officials showed him that nowhere in the country were sugar plantations any longer being cultivated on a great scale—except for a few estates run by government officials who could command the forced labor of convicts. The policy of offering cultivators a fourth of the total crop of a plantation as wages was luring practically no laborers to work.[37] Even the few owners who offered the fourth plus daily wages had no success. Quite simply, the average Haitian preferred to be his own master, working only when he wished, and particularly working only for himself and his family.

37. This fourth in wages must not be confused with the quarter in taxes abolished by Pétion. See page 46 for a discussion of the quarter-crop wage system.

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175 423 up so many of these, there was no way short of a revolution to reconstitute the now parceled estates. Obviously the Code did not envisage the control of serfs by small property owners, yet there were more small owners than large.

175 184 466 In the third place, the Spanish-speaking masses of the eastern part of the island had never experienced the kind of forced labor with which most Haitians had been at one time or another familiar. Their noncoöperation made enforcement difficult.

175 647 Finally, the administration of so detailed a plan called for the establishment, at once and yet in complete order, of a fully trained corps of bureaucrats, perfectly coöperating with each other, most of them educated, and all incorruptibly honest. If every literate person in the state had been drafted for service, Boyer could not have filled all the offices required by the Code.

175 465 434 After brief and piecemeal experience with the law in operation, moreover, even the few remaining large landholders turned against it. While they approved the provisions for forced labor, they discovered that to turn over to the workers a quarter or half of the annual crop, in a falling world market, gave too slim a profit.[42] Without the support even of its original sponsors, failure of the law was inevitable.

175 648 652 These factors alone would have been enough to kill the Code; but its real death blow came from an entirely different quarter. The year before the agricultural laws were passed, Boyer had achieved what he considered to be a political master stroke. He had made a financial settlement with France whereby Haiti, in return for a large sum in cash and regular annual payments for sixty years thereafter, should receive full recognition of independence from France; also the former mother country would renounce all claims to any properties in the country. Boyer had felt that the chief debilitating influence on the political and economic life of his people was the constant dread that France might one day return to claim her lost colony. To rid the nation of that incubus, therefore, seemed to him a high feat of statesmanship, no matter what the financial cost.[43]

[433] [24] 42. Coffee, now the staple crop of Haiti, was meeting competition from the other coffee-producing countries of the world. To put the sugar manufactories into working condition again called for more money than was available.

[643] [648] 43. Boyer's hand was forced to a certain extent by France, which had been exerting diplomatic pressure upon Haiti; the President, however, seemed to regard the settlement as a distinct coup.

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"empire" tottered to economic ruin. Graft, default on the debt, increasing deficits, and debased currency were the order of the day, and so continued until 1859, when the accumulation of anger over the useless wars and the humiliating defeats made the Emperor so unpopular that a new and more carefully planned revolution accomplished his downfall.

Fifteen years of administration by Negro rulers had broken the political power of the colored élite. Only three light-skinned men became president thereafter until the occupation of Haiti by the American Marines in 1915; in the seventy-two years following Boyer's downfall, mulattoes ruled during only eight. The army under a black general was too powerful, a colored president too hampered by suspicion, to make the political game worth the candle. The colored élite, therefore, adapted themselves to existing conditions as best they could, controlling the business life of Haiti, filling the law offices and, because of their literacy, the secretaryships of state, and indulging in honorific cultural pursuits.

In the years after Soulouque the basic realities of Haitian life were changed hardly at all by shifting political administrations. Some of the presidents were mildly progressive, many were indifferent; still more were actually harmful; but the lives of the mass of peasants were not often touched by presidential vagaries. Politics was an affair almost wholly of townspeople, of the army, the élite, and the pseudo-élite. Revolutions, counterrevolutions, movements of reform, international tangles, financial woes, and most of the other complications to which unstable states are heir, absorbed the attention of rulers and upper-class folk who were politically inclined.

Constitutions were made by presidents and changed by their successors; the Senate passed contradictory laws in the same session if the chief executive so recommended; the courts were presided over by the president's men. Haitian law in the latter half of the nineteenth century was what the president's immediate strength and wish made it—or else it was folk custom, undisturbed by the rulers.

Never once, in the three quarters of a century after Boyer's time, did Haiti approach the high standard of production known in colonial days or in the early years of independence. The pattern of Haitian social and economic life became fixed in this seventy-five years. Haiti became a country of small-scale tillage by a peasant population, with only enough external trade to provide moderate

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Haiti was in constant financial straits. Money had to be borrowed

abroad; then paid back at the promised time or a foreign warship would appear at some Haitian port. The steady drain of annual indemnity payments to France,[7] the cost of subduing revolutionary movements, and the large sum eaten up even in times of peace by wages to the army made successive presidents continue to yield government land for small sums of ready cash, in spite of Geffrard's announcement that no more state lands would be alienated. Nissage Saget, coming to power by a successful revolution, paid out fifteen acres to each soldier who fought in his campaign in the South.[8] The straits of the government resembled those of the Continental Congress in America during the Revolution.

Another impulse to parcel the land came during the administration of President Lysius Salomon (1879–88). The debt to France had finally, after half a century, been paid off; that incubus removed, Salomon instituted numerous reforms, financial, military, educational. On February 26, 1883, he signed a law by which every citizen of Haiti might conceivably become a landowner even if he lacked money to buy land. Upon receipt of a written agreement to cultivate certain tropical crops—specifically, sugar, coffee, cotton, cacao, and tobacco—the government would grant provisional title to a portion of fifteen to twenty-five acres of land taken from the public domain. The grant became final if, after a period of from two to five years, three quarters of the land had been effectively cultivated.

Five hundred requests were made in 1884 for such grants, and twelve hundred in the following year.[9] Thereafter one finds no records of applications for land; the peasants had discovered the hidden trap in this apparent generosity. How could a peasant with a tiny farm lacking implements and tools, not to mention ready cash, be expected to cultivate important crops on fifteen or twenty acres of land? He would have to cut down trees, uproot wild plants, fertilize the ground, purchase equipment and seeds, and then wait several years for a crop. As Thoby says, "And even then he was not a

7. See above, pp. 70–71.

8. Law of July 12, 1870. In August of the same year, Nissage required an inventory to be taken of state lands remaining.

9. J.-C. Dorsainvil, *Manuel d'histoire d'Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1934), p. 317, cites these figures. They are contested by Dr. F. Dalencour, *Le Sauvetage national par le retour à la terre*, p. 31, who maintains that only 800 applications came in altogether. Here, as elsewhere, Haitian records are incomplete.

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175 643 642 The twentieth century began inauspiciously with a succession of dull incompetents in the presidency. General Sam's administration (1896–1902) had been distinguished only by lethargic calm. Nord Alexis (1902–8), over eighty when elected, prolonged the peace by doing nothing to disturb it; he solved his financial problems by issuing paper money, while his political "policy" involved nothing more significant than the sponsoring of festivals to celebrate Haiti's hundred years of independence. The mild revolution which displaced him substituted a president more puerile than oppressive, Antoine Simon (1908–11), who is best revealed in a terse comment by a Haitian author: "When he passed by on a street or through a public square, everyone, foreigners as well as Haitians, must stand still, even stop smoking, and respectfully salute the Head of State. At any instant, without reason, the functionaries of the capital might be called to the Palace to endure his interminable and insipid discourses."[2] A revolution cut short his tedious régime.

Within the next four years six presidents rose and fell. Their administrations were worse than ephemeral; indeed, they hardly deserve the name of governments. Not one of the six had a happy time in office; the first was blown up with his palace, the second is generally thought to have been poisoned, the next three were quickly deposed by revolutions, and the last, after massacring his imprisoned political enemies, was horribly cut into small bits by an infuriated mob. Anarchy then ensued.

175 652 648 For years Haitian presidents had staved off financial collapse by heavy borrowing abroad. United States financial interests were involved in the Bank of Haiti and in a railroad company, while the American government, through its Monroe Doctrine, was disturbed by French and German threats to collect their Haitian debts by force. When President Guillaume Sam[3] was hacked to pieces by the mob, the United States landed Marines from gunboats which were conveniently just outside the harbor of Port-au-Prince. Beginning on July 28, 1915, the Occupation lasted for nineteen years.

128 648 With the question of America's justification in the matter of occupying Haiti this book cannot pretend to deal. As with most large matters of policy, convincing arguments can be offered on both sides. The important fact for this study is that the presence of white

2. J.-C. Dorsainvil, *Manuel d'histoire d'Haïti*, p. 338.
3. Not to be confused with Simon Sam, who had ruled twenty years earlier.

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Since it was an entrenched interest, however, no responsible statesman had dared to threaten its hold. The Marines swept it out of existence, undertaking to substitute for it a trained constabulary of only 2,000 men who should combine routine military tasks with police duty in the scattered towns. Results were immediately apparent: the weighty incubus of soldiers' wages was lifted from the treasury; thousands of men were deprived of sinecures and put back into productive economic activities; the constant threat of armed revolution was removed; better order was kept by 2,000 trained men in trim uniform than by twelve times that number of ragged loafers who called themselves soldiers; and since the army was no longer the great steppingstone to political office, the élite felt more secure from assault by ambitious but uneducated army men. From 1843 to 1915 the élite had endured many lower-caste presidents because these were able to control the army; now the army had disappeared.

The Marines did much that was of indisputable benefit to Haiti. This was acknowledged even by the most vocal patriots who soon began to campaign for an end of the Occupation. Where there had been no real work in public health, Americans now built hospitals, established clinics, cleaned up the sources of many diseases, laid down sewage systems, gave the towns pure water. In 1915 there were only three automobiles in the country, and no roads for them to travel; the Americans built many miles of paved roads. In 1915 there had been only one wharf, two short stretches of railroad, two lighthouses, one electric plant; the Americans undertook electrification, telephone systems, the construction of administration buildings, and other public conveniences. Whether in such visible matters or in the obscurer realms of currency, banking, and budgets hardly a phase of daily life was left untouched. And judged by the standards of civilization the Marines improved what they touched.

But rancor against the Americans began early and continued to the bitter end in 1934. The pride of all Haitians was deeply wounded by the Occupation. For 111 years they had governed themselves and had assumed themselves to be a sovereign nation; the Marines patroling the countryside were vivid reminders that Haiti had never been independent except by sufferance, and that white men were once more overseeing the destinies of colored and Negro men. Nevertheless, the reasons proclaimed for opposing the Occupation were not those of hurt vanity. Some of those given were entirely

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reported in Haiti that although they joined patriotically in the cheering when the Marines embarked in 1934, many of them shed tears to see the departure of 2,000 monthly salaries, most of which had been enriching the local tills. Indeed, the country came much closer to establishing a mercantile middle class during the Occupation than ever before. The only real control left behind by the Americans was an overseer of the national budget, destined to leave as soon as Haiti's external debt was finally paid off. To that end the government saved rather than spent, so that businessmen found no comfort in the state of economic affairs, particularly during a decade of world depression and European disturbance. Nationalist economic theories in Europe have upset Haitian markets, so that the élite thriftily save their pennies against hard times instead of spending them freely on present luxuries. The American overseer of the budget withdrew in 1941.

At many points the forces of the Occupation touched unwittingly upon deep-rooted prejudices of the Haitian people. In order to secure laborers for road construction the Marines revived an old corvée law of Christophe's time, requiring forced labor on public works at the need of the government. Many of the ill-nourished peasants were taxed beyond their physical powers by work on the roads, so that an armed revolt by caco guerrillas broke out. Its suppression required months of time and cost many lives, leaving in its train a great deal of ill will.

The efficient Americans also came to grief when they attempted to make Haitians orderly in the American way. Land titles were in chaos, as we have noted. American experts wished to find a basis for internal taxation, so that economic reform might be effective and permanent. The effort to have people declare their claims so that these might be properly registered had to be given up after a few weeks, for the peasant owners knew without written deeds their local boundaries, and among the squatters those who realized their title might not stand under strict investigation were understandably averse to having questions of property tenure raised by the authorities of an alien and interfering government.

Wherever Marine barracks were located, there were centres of a cultural dissemination which was bound in the long run to affect Haitian ideas and practices. Automobiles, radios, amusements, even the daily conversation of the Marines, all left their mark upon a people who had been effectively isolated from the world for more than a century.

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Boyer was overthrown by the Revolution of 1843, by all odds the

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most important of Haitian upheavals. Since its effects were to be felt for the next seventy years in the extinction of representative government and the eclipse of the élite as political rulers, it is worthy of special attention. Paradoxically, it was a revolution fomented by the élite themselves. Its background and outcome reveal the power in word, and the impotence in deed, of this group by 1843.

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The constitution of 1816, devised by Pétion's henchmen, had granted the president initiative in all laws except those concerning taxation. After the agreement of 1825 with France,[6] however, Boyer, hard pressed by the need of paying the indemnity each year, began to restrict the number of officials, diminish their salaries, and veto all projects favorable to the development of public instruction and improvement which might cause further expenditure. By temperament he was an autocrat.[7] Every valuable measure must come from him alone; whatever another person proposed he would find a thousand reasons to discard. Sarcastic and vain, he did not know how to smooth ruffled feelings or make conflicting groups reconcile their differences. His personal weaknesses of character alienated the sympathies of many once-devoted officials.

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During his long presidency Boyer also systematically ignored the younger generation, men who admired the efforts of Pétion, ardent reformers who wished to devote their energies to the improvement of Haiti. The military career had no attraction for them: the higher ranks, alone bringing sufficient salary for a congenial way of life, were too few and one could achieve them only with difficulty, for since 1825 advancement had been submitted to rigorous rules. On the other hand, the paths of administration were severely guarded by those admirable great functionaries left over from the government of Pétion—men like Inginac and Imbert. But age had slowed their activity, and still Boyer kept them on. The younger generation mocked this "gerontocracy" and supported the parliamentary opposition.

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The youth of the élite class continued to go to France for their education, returning to Haiti to take part in the lively political discussions which made one of their chief occupations. During the first decade of Boyer's administration they generally supported him, for

6. By which France recognized the independence of Haiti in return for the payment of a large annual indemnity.

7. "In everything, he wishes to dominate," Pétion had said of him.

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the still weak United States, France—the traditional enemy of Haitians, and moribund Spain, who was in fact shortly to lose most of her empire in the New World. Since he did not mean to drive his people to work, he resolved to exploit to the full the benefits of foreign trade in the hope that profits from exports would stimulate production. As for allies, he cultivated the friendship of the United States, but also sought to wean British merchants from the Northern ports. To this end, although he levied duties of twelve per cent on goods of other nations, he reduced duties on English goods to five per cent.[9]

Pétion, content to govern without an impressive court, gave the greatest encouragement possible to trade; he sheared expenses and managed to balance his budget. In 1818, for example, his revenues were $2,646,000 and his expenses $2,144,000, giving the republic a respectable surplus of $502,000.

Because Boyer was Pétion's disciple he followed in his predecessor's footsteps, thus fixing in his quarter-century administration the pattern of foreign trade under a tariff system. The Haitian élite seem never to have taken to commercial enterprise, nor has the country ever developed an economist even of fifth rank. Haitian thought, so eloquently articulate along political lines, has simply never turned its attention in any solid and serious way to economic problems. Nearly the whole of the foreign commerce of the republic from the earliest days was conducted by foreign merchants resident in Haiti. This was partly because the credit of the Haitians was not so generally established as to inspire confidence, but mostly it was due to lack of interest of the people in foreign trade.

In the eighteenth century Saint-Domingue had been almost the only colony producing such tropical products as sugar and coffee on a large scale; the absence of effective competition accounted for most of the prosperity of the French colony. In the nineteenth century, however, competition developed rapidly; and at this very time the laws and court decisions of Haiti began to hamper the business of the foreign merchants dealing there. By Article 21 of Boyer's Law of Patents, all persons engaging in any trade or profession except that of cultivation of the soil must be provided with a license or patent; all foreigners admitted as merchants into the republic must first secure the president's permission to acquire a patent; and when

9 See the Arrêté of October 15, 1814.

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Justice in the courts was administered by Haitians whose narrow patriotism biased their decisions.

5. A temperamental tariff policy. Not only were imports subject to a tariff which might be changed at the whim of any president, but exports also were taxed. When an administration was in need of funds it might suddenly, without warning, raise the tax on coffee exports and so disrupt a merchant's business plans. The customs-houses were in charge of Haitians who steadily became more inefficient and grasping as the century progressed, until many foreign merchants felt that the only way of getting business dispatched was by means of bribes. Examinations at customs were long drawn out, often there was open thievery, and erroneous valuations were common.

6. The burden of the indemnity to France. Contracted by Boyer in 1825, this annual payment for sixty years was an incubus to every administration, leaving no surplus in the treasury for public works, education, or any internal development; likewise, it made the threat of foreign interference all the more imminent.

7. A debased currency. Pétion was the first president to devalue money, and his example was frequently followed thereafter. Counterfeiting was general. When a country's monetary system is unstable, its officials accustomed to bribery and graft,[17] and its financial structure almost nonexistent, there is little chance for sound economic development.

8. Dependence upon a single crop. Haitian economy was tied to the staple coffee, grown with indifferent care, prepared for the market in outmoded fashion, and sold in competition with coffee from more scientifically run plantations in other tropical countries.

9. Political instability. The recurrent revolutions in Haiti made foreigners chary of participating in the country's business, since the government which made a contract might be out of office before the ink was dry.

10. Indifference of the élite to economic pursuits. What profits were obtainable went into the pockets of foreign merchants, not those of Haitian businessmen. In 1842 the comparative exports of the

17. Sir Spenser St. John, always a bitter critic of Haiti, remarked (*Hayti, or The Black Republic*, p. 88) sardonically that "Boyer had the rare quality of being honest, and left in the treasury, on his departure, the sum of £200,000, the first and last chief who was ever guilty of so unaccountable a weakness."

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Foreign relations, in the political sense, revolved during most of

the nineteenth century about loans and insurrections. Haiti maintained legations in those countries to which she exported most of her coffee and from which she might obtain credit. Revolutionary leaders sometimes promised as a bait for foreign assistance either tariff preferences or the cession of Môle Saint Nicolas for a naval base; if successful, they might fulfill the first promise but, because of the Monroe Doctrine and the watchful jealousy of the big powers, the Môle was never ceded. The United States had varied dealings with Haiti. Before the Civil War there was more than one movement to transplant freed slaves from this country to Haiti; after the war the United States came very near annexing Haiti; and negotiations over the cession of the Môle did not end until America acquired Guantanamo Bay, across the Windward Passage in Cuba, as a naval base to guard the entrance to the Caribbean.[1]

It was finally the combination of complicated economic affairs and political collapse which produced the Occupation of 1915. In the preceding year both France and Germany threatened to send warships to collect loans due them, and were stopped only by the outbreak of the World War. An American bank held as its subsidiary the Bank of Haiti, in which the government deposited its funds; when in 1914–15 the presidents followed each other in rapid succession, the bank on instructions from New York refused to allow the government to withdraw its funds. Haiti in retaliation threatened to seize its deposits by force, but the New York bank persuaded the United States government to send a ship to transfer the gold from Port-au-Prince to New York. There were other financial complications, particularly those relating to defaulted payments to a railroad company. What finally precipitated the Occupation, however, was anarchy. When, in July, 1915, President Sam slaughtered 168 political prisoners and was himself mobbed and murdered, the American government ordered the landing of its Marines from a warship conveniently anchored in the harbor near Port-au-Prince.[2]

From 1915 to 1934 the foreign affairs of Haiti were under the direction of the United States, whose main concern was to order the economic relations of the country in such fashion that Haiti should

1. The foreign relations of Haiti with the United States have been clearly treated in Ludwell L. Montague, *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938*.

2. One of the best accounts of the events leading up to the Occupation is that of H. P. Davis, *Black Democracy*.

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Besides the figures given above must be set there of the government

budget, which is annually in the neighborhood of $7,000,000, and of its annual imports and exports, neither of which generally exceeds $10,000,000 a year. Chicago, with its population of three million, has an annual budget of about $275,000,000, aside from state and federal services.

To care for all the needs of three million people in Haiti there is a sum of money less than that available annually to several of our American universities. Out of the seven million dollars must come all salaries of officials, legislators, judges, policemen, schoolteachers; the wages of all janitors and day laborers employed by the government; the upkeep of all schools, roads, lighthouses, experiment stations; the maintenance of such important public services as health, sanitation, education, soil development, reforestation. Since there are few towns, practically every improvement which takes place must be paid for by the central government.

Haiti's growth in population is not a new thing. It has been increasing steadily since 1804 while the soil of the country was being worn out and foreign trade grew stagnant. The country is entirely agricultural, there being absolutely no manufacturing industry worth the name. The people consequently live upon a subsistence economy. The soil is still fertile enough to preserve life in the teeming population, though undernourishment is general. Most of the people have no "artificial" wants and could not satisfy them under present conditions even if they had.

Assuming the census of Dessalines in 1805 to be even approximately accurate, the population is now eight times what it was then. The working of the Law of Population[3] is implacable: if population increases while economic efficiency remains static or declines, either there will be an increasing death rate or the standard of living must sink—or both. In the case of Haiti, economic efficiency is certainly not what it was under the forced-labor system of Dessalines: the death rate has been continuously high; it is the standard of living which has suffered.

To grasp the import of Haiti's problem of overpopulation one

3. "Population tends to increase up to the limit of the supporting power of the land, relative to the economic efficiency and to the standard of living of the people at the time." (For an amplification of this discussion on overpopulation, see the note on p. 320.) The law of population as stated here is a modification of that given by Sumner and Keller, *The Science of Society*, I, 46; their statement, in turn, is that of Malthus with the added cultural items of economic efficiency and the standard of living.

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175 Boyer carried on Pétion's policy of no taxation. It was not until the American
657 Occupation that Haitians could be said to be taxed. Ninety per cent of the state's
income between 1900 and 1915 regularly came from tariffs, and only ten per cent
● [652] from internal taxes. Even the efforts of the Americans, resulting in the laws of 1924
and 1928, were on the whole restricted to a few excise taxes. A land tax was hope-
less, due to the utter confusion of titles and the stubborn impassivity of peasant
squatters.[5]

2. *Monetary Policy of Pétion and Boyer*

175 The monetary situation in Haiti was chaotic in its early days. The gold money
652 of France, Spain, England, and the United States circulated, as did small French
coins, and the coins and paper money created by the Haitian rulers, who had com-
plete control over money. For example, Pétion decreed[6] an increase in the value of
the *gourde d'Espagne* from 8 livres 5 sols, to 9 livres; of the French *écu* of 6 francs
from 9 livres to 9 livres 15 sols; and the 5 franc écu from 7 livres 10 sols to 8 livres
5 sols; this almost doubled the value of money in circulation. He also struck small
coins to replace the pieces of 30, 24, 15, 12, and 6 sols of France. His small coins were
merely token money.[7] The paper currency created by Pétion and so easily counter-
feited has been mentioned.

[433] Boyer was continually in financial perplexities. Production was declining while
expenditures had to be radically increased on account of the settlement with
France in 1825. Boyer's budget was not a large one judged by modern standards,
the average expenditure each year being about $5,000,000. To meet this, customs
duties on imports and exports brought in about $2,200,000 annually; territorial
duties on produce, houses, patents or licenses, market fees, and the like, a similar
[316] sum; but some half-million dollars had to be borrowed each year. The government
hoped to get something from developing mines in the Spanish part of the island,
[425] but this hope failed. It was thought also that the sale of government lands might
bring in some revenue, but few people wanted to invest money, when they had it,
[454] in land, with agricultural affairs developing as they were and no way of making
[465] people work: investment in trade was more promising. The national treasury was
so empty that both the civil and military officials were poorly paid. It was fre-
[661] quently said that almost all administrators and persons in authority were open to
bribery. Meantime the number of civil servants was increasing: there was a swarm
[647] of hirelings and subalterns in every commune, like a host of vampires. By their
lack of honesty, conscientiousness, and efficiency, immense sums were lost an-
nually to the treasury.

5. See the *Report of the American High Commissioner* (1929), p. 19.

6. May 4, 1808.

7. *Pétion voyant s'échapper de ses États les gourdes qu'effrayaient ses démêlés avec Christophe, eut pour les retenir l'ingénieuse idée d'y pratiquer une traude. Ce moyen était trop efficace pour ne pas réussir, et il était trop simple pour que l'emploi n'en fût pas généralisé au moins par son équivalent. Ainsi, lorsqu'il en vint à battre monnaie, le chef de l'état du Sud descendit le titre de sa gourde à peu près au titre de la gourde espagnole tarée par son empereur. Il lui donna 638 millièmes de fin.*" Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue*, II, 194.

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3. Pétion, Boyer, and Inginac as Administrators

Pétion lived very simply in the South, like a plain republican magistrate. He sat on his piazza, accessible to all his people. He had a quiet way of answering his opponents which did not make enemies of them. He made his secretary answer every letter that arrived, no matter how small; many were simply inquiries about the President's health. Yet the wars between Pétion and Christophe dragged on from 1807 to 1812,[1] draining the finances of the republic. Not only the crops declined: so also did most of the public improvements instituted by the colonial planters; so did trade; so did habits of industry. Everything seemed to conspire against hard work. The rich plains of the Cul-de-Sac and the Artibonite Valley were ravaged by fire and warfare; necessary equipment for sugar making was destroyed, the money for new machines and buildings was unavailable; and the men were drawn away from their land by military duties.

Inginac, Boyer's secretary of state, after the Revolution of 1843 had got rid of both the President and his secretary, wrote his memoirs. There are some revealing passages. Inginac reports that Pétion told him only forty days before his death that Boyer was a man of probity and delicacy, "but unhappily he is petulant; he is too set in his ways to conciliate those who might assist him. In everything he wants to dominate, and he will bring unhappiness to the country if he does not change." Inginac cites cases to show that Pétion's prophecy was correct. Boyer in 1820 repealed the most unpopular laws, particularly those requiring personal corvée and the repair of public roads; but instead of taking advice from his cabinet on important economic matters, he frequently announced that he was president and would not be run by anybody. Consequently, according to Inginac, he made mistakes which might have been avoided.[2] Defending himself, the former secretary offers a clue to the failure of the régime—possibly unavoidable—by showing that the administration merely suggested, did not require, action:

"Have I not constantly, not only preached and corresponded about the necessity of making agriculture prosperous, but also given work at as high wages as the treasury could afford: Have I not created habitations on lands formerly totally uncultivated, putting formerly idle men to work: Have I not published at my own expense, although I directed the National Printery, methods for cultivating tobacco and coffee plants, of which I distributed gratis several thousand copies!"[3]

In spite of all encouragement which the administration could offer, agricultural production continued to decline, while expenses increased, and external trade fell off from a third to a half. The government had to borrow from the banking firm of Lafitte in Paris to find even the interest for

1. Hostilities between the two parts of Haiti ceased about 1812 because of the mutual fear on the part of Christophe and Pétion of Napoleon's ascendancy, and the threat which this constituted to the whole former colony. Their war had ravaged the plantations and removed laborers from the soil. Then came the War of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain, cutting off many of the supplies which Haiti drew from both countries. There was accordingly an unwritten truce, with no further hostilities. A neutral territory of ten leagues between the boundaries of the two states was tacitly agreed upon: neither army was to enter it. This was the rich plain of Boucassin, once the garden of the island, now a wilderness.

2. Joseph Balthazar Inginac, *Mémoires* (Kingston, Jamaica, 1843), pp. 32, 34, 36.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

payments due to the French government.